



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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International Association of Correctional Officers Awards National Correctional Officer of the Year *Maryland Corrections Sergeant Honored as Finalist*

TOWSON, MD (June 15, 2005) – The International Association of Correctional Officers (IACO) recently announced the 2005 National Correctional Officer of the Year. The Lansing, Michigan-based association selected Sue Freno, A corrections officer with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. There were five finalists for this national honor, and Sgt. Paul Coombs, a correctional officer of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Sgt. Coombs is assigned to the Maryland Correctional Institution – Jessup (MCI-J).

According to the Commissioner of the Division of Correction (DOC), Frank Sizer, “Sgt. Coombs has the kind of commitment and experience that give him credibility with his fellow officers, his supervisors and the inmates.” According to Commissioner Sizer, “He is a man to whom others can go for guidance in the way officers should conduct themselves.”

Sgt. Coombs entered the Maryland Correctional Training Commission Academy in 1985 as a Correctional Officer I and has worked his way up through the ranks to a promotion of Sergeant in August of 2000. He has worked at MCI-J since he started 20 years ago and even turned down a previous promotion because it required a transfer to a different prison. During his career he has instructed many in-services for other officers including first-aid and CPR, self-defense, and firearms. Sgt. Coombs also taught Marshal Arts in the community for many years.

Over 5000 nomination forms were sent out to institutions nationwide in January soliciting the best of the correctional field. Nominator’s were asked to answer questions regarding the officers overall contribution to the operation of the unit, unique personal characteristics they poses, acts of heroism, community work, continued training and education, professional contributions to the field as well as civic and outside activities that

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enhance the officers' performance. The Awards Committee then scores the nominations with the winners and finalists being selected from the highest cumulative points.

The International Association of Correctional Officers is a professional organization dedicated to upgrading standards for the correctional officer profession through training and education, and to bringing about public recognition of the tremendous job correctional officers do every day. IACO generated National Correctional Officer Week 25 years ago to honor outstanding officers and supervisors.

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